

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MARKEY OPPOSES LATEST SBC MERGER

"Humpty-Dumpty" must not be put back together again

WASHINGTON, DC -- The following is the statement of U.S. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Ranking Democrat on the House Telecommunications, Trade, and Consumer Protection Subcommittee, regarding the announcement by SBC Communications that it intends to merge with Ameritech:

"I believe that this merger is bad for consumers, bad for competition, and bad for innovation and job growth in the telecommunications industry. SBC is the Bell company that has been most eager to engage in a scorched-earth litigation strategy to preserve its local telephone monopoly while "cherry-picking" the portions of the Telecommunications Act that serve its purposes. This latest attempt by SBC to put "Humpty-Dumpty" back together again must be stopped. I believe that the penchant of communications colossi for cozy cooperation in the marketplace rather than full-throttle competitive combat is clearly at work in the SBC boardroom, and trustbusters and regulators must work to counteract this latest 'urge to merge.'

"It was the intent of Congress in the Telecommunications Act that the local phone monopoly cease to exist and that the benefits of robust marketplace competition be brought to consumers in SBC's local telephone market in exchange for allowing SBC into the long distance marketplace. It is clear by SBC's actions in the courtroom that the company has obvious disdain for that intent, and also clear from its actions in the marketplace that it has no intention of abiding by the deal it struck with Congress and the nation's consumers.

"SBC stands as one of the last, and among the largest, monopolies left in America's telecommunications marketplace. I believe that the public interest compels that the FCC and the Department of Justice vigorously oppose this merger."

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